

The Nagooka Snake.

Cable Illustrated Magazine.

It was about the middle of August, near as I can remember, that I started off on a week's hunt, for game had grown a little scarce about our place; and it was on this trip that I first met the Nagooka snake. I had heard all the way coming eastward about the peculiar traits ascribed to this animal, so well known in the region of Mozambique, but I looked upon the wonderful stories of its sagacity as fairy tales. Every detail of the thing had been described to me: the flat head, big eyes, fat belly, and, most peculiar of all, the loud rattles at the end of the tail, like those on the American rattlesnake. It was claimed for the Nagooka that, though a most poisonous and dangerous snake, it possessed the one Christian virtue of doing a good turn to one who had befriended it.

The whole thing seemed like tommy rot to me until, shortly after daybreak one morning, while pushing through the tangled underbrush, I stumbled into an open, and fell almost directly on an immense flat head, illuminated with eyes that seemed quite human in their expression. A horrible fascination riveted me to the spot, and to save my soul I could not move, though my face was nearly touching the one that waved to either side in a slow, pendulum-like motion. I regained my senses as suddenly as I had lost them, and, springing back, was astonished not to see the snake follow me. I soon noted the reason, however, for the animal was caught fast in the fork of a tree stump, and a bulge on either side prevented it from moving.

My first impulse, of course, was to shoot, but the longer I looked at the beautiful brute—he was about twenty feet from tip to tip—the more cruel it seemed to murder it. The eyes still maintained a mild, cat-like lustre, and seemed incapable of deceit. Still, you can never judge an umbrella for the cover, and I determined to let go. But when I raised my rifle to my shoulder the great head darted frantically in every direction, now raising itself in the air and again doubling up toward the body and scuttling along the grass. The eyes, too, narrowed down to an ugly slit and so fascinated me again that perforce I could not shoot, but was drawn towards the yellow and brown thing.

At this the eyes again opened frankly and pleadingly. At the same time the serpent set up an incessant rattle with its tail, and then I felt certain that I was up against a Nagooka snake. Hesitating no longer now, I made a lever out of my gun barrel, and after considerable exertion, succeeded in extricating the huge body from the trap, and whatever misgivings I had vanished straightway when the great thing curled up at my feet and gazed at me in mute thankfulness. After that I could not shake him off. By day he was either traveling beside me or in the rear, and at night he made a very acceptable sentinel. I grew rather tired of the snake though, and as I neared home, shuddered at the thought of introducing it into the home circle. Threats, persuasions, and entreaties proved futile. The animal refused to leave me. I saw there was no way to get rid of the Nagooka (for I was satisfied as to its identity now) but to kill it or take it along home. Thanks to my guardian angel I decided on the latter course. Otherwise I would not be here to tell the story.

In a short time my snake had become a fixture, and though he never fancied Curry and Rice and the rag tag blacks about the place, with my own family, and especially with the children, his conduct was irreproachable. He made a good watch, for a stranger never approached our diggings but that the Nagooka did not warn us by a loud rattle. November 13 that year was the hottest day I ever spent in Africa, and the night was no cooler. The sun had beat down on the veldt until it was completely baked. In addition the bush fires on all sides had taken every particle of moisture out of the atmosphere, and a lime kiln seemed like a brewery compared to one's mouth. For hours I tossed wearily on the shakedown and finally, after midnight, lapsed into slumber. I seemed to have slept but a moment when a terrific crash in the dining room awoke me, followed instantly by hoarse screams of terror in the Basuto tongue.

Our house contained three rooms. A large one used for combination kitchen and dining room occupied one side of the house, being separated from the two bedrooms by a hall. The building, of course, was very crude, and though I had rigged up some doors, our windows consisted merely of square holes in the logs. The hot weather permitted of everything being kept open in order to get all the ventilation possible. The crash, I knew immediately, was caused by the falling of the only lamp we possessed, and the groans and scuffle told me that a terrific struggle was in progress.

It took but a trice to grab my gun and clap shut the door into the next room, where the wife and children were grouped, panic-stricken and imploring me not to leave them. The yells had subsided somewhat now, but the struggle continued, and, waiting for a moment when the participants had worked over towards the window, I sprang in with my rifle cocked. I believe me, good people, when I tell you that there in the middle of the floor, grasping a huge knob-kerry, his massive frame reeking with perspiration, and just on the point of collapse, stood Blooming Fool, the Basuto. He had evidently come for his long promised revenge, for he was topped up in the peculiar war costume of his tribe, painted with vermillion, a dozen strings of brass about his neck and Kalahari charms galore adorning his limbs. He had not reckoned on his host, however, for he did a man bent on murder get a reception. The light of

Hell was in the nigger's eyes, and he would have completely wiped out the Forster family that night had it not been for one thing—the Nagooka snake. The faithful animal had detected, in some occult way, the presence of the Basuto hound, and had crept upon him even more quietly than the negro had approached his sleeping family. Hideous now in its fierceness, the great serpent had coiled himself in four coils about the would-be murderer and was slowly squeezing him to death. The arched neck swayed from side to side and the narrow eyes glittered with unholy joy, waiting to strike the fatal blow. Too exhausted to breathe, his eyes bulging from their sockets, the poor fool of a black dropped, one by one, his club, assegai, and leopard skin shield. With another twist of the gleaming coil, so that we could hear the bones crunching and snapping, his arms dropped helpless by his side, he lurched forward like a prize fighter who has received the knockout, and muttering, almost inaudibly, the single word, "Ikona," collapsed. It was all over in a moment. So quickly did it take place, in fact, that I never thought of intervening till too late.

The appearance at that moment, at the window, of the boys Curry and Rice, both terror-stricken, recalled me to action, and at the same time acquainted me with the wonderful human qualities and thoughtful sagaciousness of the Nagooka snake, for the great animal had tried to withhold from killing his victim, at first simply disarming him, by thrusting his tail out of the window, and was even now rattling lustily for assistance. Having performed his part in the drama, he shuffled across the floor and disappeared silently in the tall grass to continue his ominous vigil. As for the black, he was beyond all resuscitation. We picked up his limp and lifeless form, so recently surcharged with brutal strength, and laid it near the edge of our clearing, where the Blooming Fool's Matabele friends found it in the morning.

A Pied Piper of Hamelin Wanted.

Birmingham Daily Post

The question now exercising the minds of shopkeepers and others who occupy premises adjacent to the Birmingham old Meat Market is, What will become of the rats? It is common knowledge that the old shambles in Gloucester street and in the passage running between that thoroughfare and the old market have been infested with rats for many years. They have bred there literally in thousands, despite many attempts, individually and collectively, to keep them under. This statement is no exaggeration. As recently as Christmas Eve over two hundred rats were taken alive on one butcher's premises, and on another day a hundred were caught in another slaughterhouse. To use the words of a wholesale butcher, the place is alive with them. When the premises were all occupied, abundance of food for the vermin was provided by the offal of the slaughtered animals, but since the removal of many dealers to the new market in Bradford street, the food supply of the rats has run short, a condition of things they scarcely appreciate. Grown bold through hunger they are to be seen in the old market running over the floor in search of food, driven to eat orange peel, and fighting for that; and during the week their presence has attracted a large number of sightseers; in fact, it is the exception not to see a crowd around the iron gates of the building both in Jamaica Row and Dean street. As a shopkeeper near by put it, "There have been hundreds of people watching hundreds of rats all the week." Many of the vermin have commenced to migrate, and already some of the stall keepers in the Vegetable Market are beginning to grumble. One gentleman informed us that rats had been nuisance enough before to him, and he did not know what he could do if hundreds of half-starved ones invaded the market. On many occasions previously annoyance and trouble had been caused through the sides and bottoms of bags having been gnawed away, allowing the contents to spill on the ground. The individual in question was strongly of the opinion that some action should be taken by the authorities with a view to the extermination, or at any rate the diminution, of the pests; "and," added he, "now is a fitting time to wage war on them."

The objection to the authorities taking action as regards the old slaughterhouses, where the rats abound, is that they are private property; but seeing that the old market is unoccupied for the greater part of the week, and that the rats frequent there, traps, snares, or even poison might be used, or other steps taken to rid the place of the rodents, and to prevent their migration to surrounding premises, or possibly even to the new Meat Market itself. They will scarcely find the last named place so congenial for thriving and multiplying as the old slaughterhouses by reason of the concrete floors. They may get there, and doubtless some of them will do so, but in the absence of secure hiding places they will run the risk of being easily caught and killed. That, at any rate, is the opinion of the market authorities. However one looks at the matter, there can be no doubt that the deserted rats threaten to be serious nuisance to the neighborhood, and several shopkeepers and dealers have already taken steps to secure their premises against the entrance of the vermin—an example which might well be followed by others ere it is too late. The Pied Piper of Hamelin might do better here than he did in the old German town near Brunswick. It is not only in the vicinity of the old Meat Market that they are to be found, for they swarm in other places nearer the centre of the city, and have been something more than a nuisance to many tradesmen.

GIN

Distilled by the HOLLAND PROCESS

Equal in flavor and surpassing in purity the most famous imported gins. Put up in packages prepared to hold contents colorless and contain respectively 14, 24, 35 and 50 gallo all under double stamps.

Telephone Call 503. Established 1855

WESER'S.

PRICE LIST FOR OYSTERS.

STANDARDS per quart, 25 Cent

EXTRA SELECTS " " 30

NEW YORK COUNTS per 100 opened, \$1.50.

NEW YORK COUNTS in shell, per 100, \$1.25.

BLUE POINTS, in shell, per 100, \$1.00.

Oysters on half-shell for Dinners

Served at all times.

WESER'S,

Corner 24th and E streets, CHIC.

A splendid stock of

NEW SCALE KIMBALL PIANOS

Endorsed by Patti, Talmagno and other leading artists.

For sale on easy terms. Every Piano fully warranted.

W. G. METZEROTT & CO.,

1130 P Street N. W.

GEORGE WILLNER

429 NINTH STREET, BET. D AND E STS

Dealer in Upholster Goods, Paper-hangings, Lace curtains, Cornices, Cords

Tassels, Damask, Rep Goods, Coughlin

Hair-cloth Carpets and Oilcloths

Manufacturer of

LOTZ'S PATENT SPRING BED

FOLDING LOUNGE,

Which has been exhibited at several fairs and in every instance received the first premium

LOUIS SCHADE,

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW,

OFFICE—304 E Street,

POINTER.



MARYLAND RYE

FOR FAMILY USE,

always for sale by

MR. XANDER, 909 7th St. N. W.,

different Vintages from all countries,

of them his own Virginia grape product, and 27 from safe Californian vine

jards, including the wines of F. Pohn

for the Ampelos Brand; also about

natured distillates, all chosen with the

scrupulousness of the experienced connoisseur for the protection of his patrons.

THE ANDERSON & NELSON DISTILLERIES CO.

HERMAN BECKURTS, President.

FRED. W. ADAMS, Secretary

Distillers of Fine Kentucky Bourbon Rye and Malt Whiskies

Louisville, Kentucky

Proprietors of the Celebrated Anderson, Buchanan, Jefferson Jackson and Nelson Distilleries.

H. H. SHUFELDT AND COMPANY

DISTILLERS. CHICAGO.

The increase of duties—owing to the McKinley Bill—on imported Gins, makes it necessary for the trade to look for a substitute to take the place of the imported article in every particular.

Therefore we desire to call your attention to our lately celebrated

(IMPERIAL and RYE MALT

GIN

Equal in flavor and surpassing in purity the most famous imported gins. Put up in packages prepared to hold contents colorless and contain respectively

14, 24, 35 and 50 gallo all under double stamps.

Telephone Call 503. Established 1855

WESER'S.

PRICE LIST FOR OYSTERS.

STANDARDS per quart, 25 Cent

EXTRA SELECTS " " 30

NEW YORK COUNTS per 100 opened, \$1.50.

NEW YORK COUNTS in shell, per 100, \$1.25.

BLUE POINTS, in shell, per 100, \$1.00.

Oysters on half-shell for Dinners

Served at all times.

WESER'S,

Corner 24th and E streets, CHIC.

A splendid stock of

NEW SCALE KIMBALL PIANOS

Endorsed by Patti, Talmagno and other leading artists.

For sale on easy terms. Every Piano fully warranted.

W. G. METZEROTT & CO.,

1130 P Street N. W.

GEORGE WILLNER

429 NINTH STREET, BET. D AND E STS

Dealer in Upholster Goods, Paper-hangings, Lace curtains, Cornices, Cords

Tassels, Damask, Rep Goods, Coughlin

Hair-cloth Carpets and Oilcloths

Manufacturer of

LOTZ'S PATENT SPRING BED

FOLDING LOUNGE,

Which has been exhibited at several fairs and in every instance received the first premium

LOUIS SCHADE,

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW,

OFFICE—304 E Street,

GEORGE WILLNER

429 NINTH STREET, BET. D AND E STS

Dealer in Upholster Goods, Paper-hangings, Lace curtains, Cornices, Cords

Tassels, Damask, Rep Goods, Coughlin

Hair-cloth Carpets and Oilcloths

Manufacturer of

LOTZ'S PATENT SPRING BED

FOLDING LOUNGE,

Which has been exhibited at several fairs and in every instance received the first premium

LOUIS SCHADE,

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW,

OFFICE—304 E Street,

GEORGE WILLNER

429 NINTH STREET, BET. D AND E STS

Dealer in Upholster Goods, Paper-hangings, Lace curtains, Cornices, Cords

Tassels, Damask, Rep Goods, Coughlin

Hair-cloth Carpets and Oilcloths

Manufacturer of

LOTZ'S PATENT SPRING BED

FOLDING LOUNGE,

Which has been exhibited at several fairs and in every instance received the first premium

LOUIS SCHADE,

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW,

OFFICE—304 E Street,

GEORGE WILLNER

429 NINTH STREET, BET. D AND E STS

Dealer in Upholster Goods, Paper-hangings, Lace curtains, Cornices, Cords

Tassels, Damask, Rep Goods, Coughlin

Hair-cloth Carpets and Oilcloths

Manufacturer of

LOTZ'S PATENT SPRING BED

FOLDING LOUNGE,

Which has been exhibited at several fairs and in every instance received the first premium

LOUIS SCHADE,

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW,

OFFICE—304 E Street,

GEORGE WILLNER

429 NINTH STREET, BET. D AND E STS

Dealer in Upholster Goods, Paper-hangings, Lace curtains, Cornices, Cords

Tassels, Damask, Rep Goods, Coughlin

Hair-cloth Carpets and Oilcloths

Manufacturer of

LOTZ'S PATENT SPRING BED

FOLDING LOUNGE,

Which has been exhibited at several fairs and in every instance received the first premium

LOUIS SCHADE,

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW,

OFFICE—304 E Street,

GEORGE WILLNER

429 NINTH STREET, BET. D AND E STS

Dealer in Upholster Goods, Paper-hangings, Lace curtains, Cornices, Cords

Tassels, Damask, Rep Goods, Coughlin

Hair-cloth Carpets and Oilcloths

Manufacturer of

LOTZ'S PATENT SPRING BED

FOLDING LOUNGE,

Which has been exhibited at several fairs and in every instance received the first premium

LOUIS SCHADE,

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW,

OFFICE—304 E Street,

GEORGE WILLNER

429 NINTH STREET, BET. D AND E STS

Dealer in Upholster Goods, Paper-hangings, Lace curtains, Cornices, Cords

Tassels, Damask, Rep Goods, Coughlin

Hair-cloth Carpets and Oilcloths

Manufacturer of

LOTZ'S PATENT SPRING BED

FOLDING LOUNGE,

Which has been exhibited at several fairs and in every instance received the first premium

LOUIS SCHADE,

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW,

OFFICE—304 E Street,

GEORGE WILLNER

429 NINTH STREET, BET. D AND E STS

Dealer in Upholster Goods, Paper-hangings, Lace curtains, Cornices, Cords

Tassels, Damask, Rep Goods, Coughlin

Hair-cloth Carpets and Oilcloths

Manufacturer of

LOTZ'S PATENT SPRING BED

FOLDING LOUNGE,

Which has been exhibited at several fairs and in every instance received the first premium

LOUIS SCHADE,

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW,

OFFICE—304 E Street,

GEORGE WILLNER

429 NINTH STREET, BET. D AND E STS

Dealer in Upholster Goods, Paper-hangings, Lace curtains, Cornices, Cords

Tassels, Damask, Rep Goods, Coughlin

Hair-cloth Carpets and Oilcloths

Manufacturer of

LOTZ'S PATENT SPRING BED

FOLDING LOUNGE,

Which has been exhibited at several fairs and in every instance received the first premium

LOUIS SCHADE,

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW,

OFFICE—304 E Street,

GEORGE WILLNER

429 NINTH STREET, BET. D AND E STS

Dealer in Upholster Goods, Paper-hangings, Lace curtains, Cornices, Cords

Tassels, Damask, Rep Goods, Coughlin

Hair-cloth Carpets and Oilcloths

Manufacturer of

LOTZ'S PATENT SPRING BED

FOLDING LOUNGE,

Which has been exhibited at several fairs and in every instance received the first premium

LOUIS SCHADE,